THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (c) City Gas Distribution projects have not been implemented in Ranchi, Jamshedpur and other cities of Jharkhand, because, as of now, there is no natural gas pipeline available in the vicinity of these cities.

In order to promote investment from public as well as private sector for laying trunk natural gas pipelines and city/local natural gas distribution networks throughout the country, the Government of India has enacted 'The Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board Act, 2006' and notified the 'Policy for Development of Natural Gas Pipelines and City or Local Natural Gas Distribution Networks'. Providing of PNG facilities depends upon availability of gas, setting up of necessary infrastructure and economic viability.

Promotion of Tourism to Uttarakhand

1213. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) what steps Government proposes to take to promote tourism in the hilly regions of Uttarakhand during the financial year; 2008-2009;

(b) whether Government also proposes to setup a few hotels to meet the requirements of middle income group in the State; and

(c) if so, what are the names of the places identified for this purpose?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (c) Development and promotion of tourism is undertaken primarily by the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations. However, the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, extends financial assistance to the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations for tourism related projects which are identified in consultation and interaction with them under the scheme 'Product/Infrastructure Development for Destinations and Circuits'.

Project proposals received from the State Governments/Union Territory that are complete in all respects are approved on the basis of inter-se priority and funds released subject to availability under respective head.

Construction of hotels is primarily a private sector activity. The Ministry of Tourism is in regular touch with the State Governments and various land owning agencies like Railways, Ministry of Civil Aviation etc. for creating land banks for hotels, allocating land on joint venture/revenue sharing basis, adopting single window clearance and increasing FAR/FSI etc. The Ministry of Tourism offers capital subsidy for budget hotels of 1, 2 and 3 star category in the country.

Promotion of domestic tourism

1214. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that it has been found that Government has missed the point that domestic tourism has to be its building block for credible tourism industry, which then will attract foreigners;

(b) whether it is also a fact that India with a domestic tourist market currently believed to be as a big as 367 million has only been sputtering along, producing more smoke than motion in a largely futile race; and